

GLOSSARY OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS

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ACROSS THE DESK

The physical act by which a bill is newly introduced; it is literally "put across the desk" by the author in either the Assembly or Senate Chambers.

ACT

A bill passed by the Legislature.

ACTION

Disposition of any question before the Legislature.

ADJOURNMENT

Termination of a meeting, occurring at the close of each legislative day upon the completion of business, with the hour and day of the next meeting being set prior to adjournment. Adjournment Sine Die (literally, adjournment without day)--final termination of the Legislature, occurring on the last day of a session, with no immediate future meeting date being set, except as previously provided in the constitution.

ADOPTION

Approval or acceptance--usually applied to amendments or resolutions.

ADVISE AND CONSENT

Confirmation by the Senate of certain appointees of the Governor.

AMENDMENT

Any alteration made or proposed to be made in a bill, motion, or clause thereof by adding, changing, substituting, or omitting.

APPORTIONMENT

Division of the state into districts from which representatives are elected.

APPROVAL BY THE GOVERNOR

Signature of the Governor on a bill passed by the Legislature.

ARCHIVES

Location and contents of public records kept by the Secretary of State, including copies of all measures considered at each session, journals, committee reports, and documents of historical value.

ASSEMBLY

The lower house of the California Legislature, consisting of 80 members, who are elected from districts apportioned on the basis of population and serve two-year terms.

AUDITOR GENERAL

Staff director of Joint Legislative Audit Committee. The Auditor General audits the financial condition of state agencies.

BICAMERAL

Legislature consisting of two houses.

BILL

A proposed law, introduced during a session for consideration by the Legislature and identified numerically in order of presentation; also, commonly but incorrectly, refers to joint and concurrent resolutions and constitutional amendments.

BUDGET

Suggested allocation of state moneys presented annually by the Governor for consideration by the Legislature; compiled by the Department of Finance in conjunction with state departmental heads.

CALENDAR

Final compilation of the Senate and Assembly histories containing indexes and tabulated information showing final disposition of all measures, brought up to date and bound together in a single volume.

CALL OF THE HOUSE

Directive by the presiding officer, on motion from the floor, empowering the sergeant-at-arms to lock the chamber, barring egress of members present, and to bring in the absent members, by arrest if necessary, to vote on a measure under consideration; action on such being suspended until motion to lift call is made, at which time immediate vote must be taken.

CALL THE ABSENTEES

Order by the presiding officer directing the reading clerk to call the names of members who have not responded to roll call.

CASTING VOTE

The deciding vote the Lieutenant Governor may cast in case of a tie vote in the Senate.

CAUCUS

An informal meeting of a group of the members, sometimes called on the basis of party affiliation. Also, the research staff and offices of the minority and majority leaders. Derived from an Algonquin Indian word.

CHAPTER OUT

Provisions of one chaptered bill conflict with another. The bill with the highest chapter number prevails.

CHIEF CLERK

An officer of the Assembly, elected by the members to direct the clerical staff and the preparation of daily printing and general publications and to be of assistance to the presiding officer in interpreting the rules.

CHRISTMAS TREE

A bill which began as a straightforward, simple bill, but has been made untenable by numerous extraneous, irrelevant and/or hostile amendments.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

A measure offered in one house and agreed to by the other, not requiring approval by the Governor, and frequently pertaining to the business of the Legislature; also, the adoption of or amendments to charters of political subdivisions of the state.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Group of six members, with three representatives from each house, appointed to consider matters upon which the two houses disagree, usually concerning amendments adopted by one house to a measure originating in the other; compromise often results from elimination of objectionable material or insertion of new amendments; if the report of the joint committee is not adopted by both houses, a new committee is appointed. Not more than three conference committees may be appointed on any one bill.

CONSENT CALENDAR

File of noncontroversial bills upon which it is unanimously agreed should be passed.

CONSTITUENT

Citizen residing within the district of a legislator.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

A resolution affecting the State Constitution, adopted by the Legislature or presented by initiative, requiring an affirmative vote of the electorate to become effective.

CONTINGENT FUND

Moneys appropriated by the respective houses for incidental operational expenses.

CONVENE

To assemble, call together a meeting. The Legislature convenes daily, weekly, and at the beginning of a session as provided for by the constitution.

DESK

The long desk in front of the presiding officer's rostrum where much of the clerical work of the body is conducted. Also, generic term for the staff and offices of the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the Assembly.

DESK IS CLEAR

Statement by presiding officer, prior to motion to adjourn, meaning there is no further business before the house.

DISTRICT

That division of the state represented by a legislator, distinguished numerically or by counties contained therein, determined on the basis of population.

DO PASS

The affirmative recommendation made by a committee in sending a bill to the floor for final vote; do pass as amended--passage recommended providing certain changes are made.

DOUBLE JOIN

Incorporate provisions of another bill to avoid possibility of chaptering out.

DROPPED

Bill killed by author.

ENACTING CLAUSE

By statutory provision, each proposed law must be preceded by the phrase, "the People of the State of California do enact as follows."

ENGROSSMENT

Comparison of printed bill to assure its likeness to the original and proper insertion of amendments. The official proofreading which follows second Reading and/or the adoption of any amendments.

ENROLLMENT

The filing of resolutions with the Secretary of State and of bills with the Governor, following the final proofreading by the house of origin which determines (for example) that amendments recommended by the other house or by conference committees are properly inserted.

EX OFFICIO

Literally, "out of" or "because of" one's office; the holding of a particular office by reason of holding another-for example, the Lieutenant Governor is, ex officio, a member of the University of California Board of Regents.

EXPUNGE

A motion by which action is deleted from the Journal, i.e., "expunge the record."

FILE

Daily printed program or agenda of business before the house and its committees.

FLIMSY

Copy of the Legislative Counsel's Digest of a newly introduced bill for the use of the press corps.

FLOOR

A colloquialism describing the interior of either house, sometimes distinguishing the membership from the presiding officer; matters before the house may be referred to as "on the floor."

FOREIGN AMENDMENTS

Legislative Counsel's term for amendments not drafted by his/her office.

GALLEY SHEET

Proof sheet made from composed type. Used by author to mark corrections for printer.

GRANDFATHER CLAUSE

Exempts existing persons or activities from provisions of an act.

HELD IN COMMITTEE

Bill fails to get sufficient votes to pass.

HIJACKED

A bill that has been "gutted" and rewritten for a different purpose against the wishes of the sponsor and/or author.

HISTORIES

Printed weekly and supplemented daily. Contains the history and progress of all bills. Also contains names, addresses, and telephone numbers of members and other legislative reference material (weeklies only).

HOMEMADE AMENDMENTS

Attaches term for amendments not drafted by the Legislative Counsel.

HOPPER

To "toss a bill in the hopper" is to present it for formal introduction and first reading.

HOUSE

Legislative body, either the Senate or Assembly in California, not limited solely, as in Washington, D.C., to the lower house.

ICE BOX

In Legislative Counsel bureau, the file in which a legislator's original bill is held until it can be delivered to him/her personally.

IMPEACHMENT

Procedure to remove from office public officials accused of misconduct.

INACTIVE FILE (of Assembly or Senate)

At author's request, a bill is placed on the Inactive File for several reasons: 1) author does not have sufficient votes for passage; 2) bill vetoed by Governor; 3) bill is defeated, reconsideration of vote is granted, and author sends bill to inactive file until the time is opportune to bring it up for another vote 4) bill has been superseded by another or author decides not to move bill after it reaches floor.

INITIATIVE

Method of direct legislation by a vote of the people.

INTERIM

Interval between regular sessions or a long recess within a session.

INTERIM STUDY

When bill is referred for interim study, it is dead for the session. The subject matter of the bill is assigned by the Rules Committee to an appropriate committee for study during the period the Legislature is not in session (the interim).

JINGLE

In either house the initial inventory of all documents read into the record.

JOURNAL

Official chronological record of the proceedings of the respective houses, printed daily in pamphlet form, certified, indexed, and bound at the close of each session.

LAW

Rule of conduct determined by the people through their elected representatives or by direct vote.

LAY ON THE TABLE

Temporary postponement of the matter before the house, which may later be brought up for consideration by a motion to "take from the table."

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Motion by one member that another be granted permission to be absent from session for a definite time and for specific purposes.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

An individual engaged to present the views of a group or organization to legislators and required by law to register with and be certified by the Joint Rules Committee. Commonly called "lobbyist."

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

Staff director of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. The person who analyzes the Governor's budget and recommends such changes as she/he deems justified.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Officer elected jointly by both houses. Directs the drafting of proposed legislation and acts as the Legislature's Lawyer.

LETTER FROM GOVERNOR

If a bill involving an appropriation is to be heard in committee before passage of the budget bill, it must be accompanied by a letter from the governor authorizing the bill to be set for hearing.

LOWER HOUSE

The Assembly.

MINUTES

Accurate record of the proceedings of a meeting in chronological order (see journal).

MOTION

A formal proposal offered by a member while the house is in session.

OFFICERS

That portion of the legislative staff elected by the membership at the beginning of a session (with the exception of the Lieutenant Governor, who is President of the Senate by Constitutional enactment). In the Assembly, the Speaker, Speaker pro Tempore, Chief Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms; in the Senate, the President pro Tempore, Secretary, Sergeant-at-Arms.

PASS ON FILE

A bill on daily file of bills to be voted on is passed over but retains same place on file (agenda of items to be considered).

PASSAGE

Favorable action on a measure before either house.

PER DIEM

Literally, per day; daily expense money rendered legislators and personnel per day.

PETITION

Formal request submitted by an individual or group of individuals to the Legislature.

POINT OF ORDER

Motion calling attention to a breach of order or of rules.

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Statement by a member that his/her character or purposes have been impugned and that his/her refutation of charges alleged to have been made.

POSTPONE

Motion to delay action on matters before the house.

PRESIDENT

The Lieutenant Governor, by constitutional enactment, is also President of the Senate.

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Literally, for the time; elected by Senate; Chairperson of Rules Committee; secures efficient disposition of Senate business and has same powers as president in the latter's absence.

PRESIDING

The management of proceedings during session by the Speaker, Speaker pro Tempore, or member appointed by the Speaker; or by the President, President pro Tempore, or any Senator called to the Chair by the President pro Tempore.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Permission to view proceedings from floor of chamber, rather than from the gallery; request made by a legislator to the presiding officer on behalf of constituents, relatives, and guests for such permission.

PROCEDURE

Rules and traditional practices of the respective houses.

QUORUM

A majority of members present necessary to conduct business in committee hearings and on the floor of both houses.

READING

Presentation of a bill before either house by the reading of title thereof; a stage in the enactment of a measure. A bill, until passed, is either in process of first, second or third reading, no matter how many times it has actually been read.

REAPPORTIONMENT

Redistricting the state for election purposes.

RECONSIDERATION

Motion which, when granted, gives rise to another vote, annulling or reaffirming an action previously taken.

REFERENDUM

Method, called "invoking the referendum," by which a measure adopted by the Legislature may be submitted to popular vote.

RESCIND

To annul an action previously taken.

RESOLUTION

Formal expression of opinion or decision (not to be confused with a proposed law) which may be offered to the house for approval by a member or group of members and which falls in one of three categories: Joint--addressed by the Legislature to the federal

government or an agency thereof; concurrent--authored by one house and agreed to by the other, not requiring approval by the Governor (frequently pertaining to the business of the Legislature, or adoption of, or amendments to, charters for political subdivisions of the state); house--measure originated and acted upon by one house.

ROLL CALL

Vote on an issue before the body; in the Assembly, by an electrical tabulating machine visible to members and connected to individual desk switches; in the Senate, by voice vote, names of members being called in alphabetical order by the Secretary of the Senate.

RULES

Methods of procedure: joint--rules governing relationship between and affecting matters between the two houses; standing--permanent rules adopted by each house for the duration of the session; temporary--practices usually adopted at the beginning of each session until standing rules are adopted, consisting generally of the standing rules of the preceding session.

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

An officer of the Senate, to be elected by the members to direct the clerical staff, the preparation of daily printing and general publications, and to assist the presiding officer in interpreting the rules.

SECTION

Portion of the codes cited in each bill which proposes to amend, create, or replace same.

SENATE

The upper house of the California Legislature, consisting of 40 members elected from districts apportioned on the basis of population, one-half of whom are elected or re-elected every two years for four-year terms.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

An officer of the Senate or Assembly, elected by the body and assisted by a staff, to maintain order and carry out the directives of the presiding officer or of the membership.

SESSION

Period during which the Legislature meets: regular--the biennial session at which all classes of legislation may be considered; extraordinary--special session called by and limited to matters specified by the Governor; daily--each day's meeting; joint--meeting of the two houses together.

SINE DIE

Literally, "without day." Adjournment without a day being set to reconvene. Final adjournment.

SKELETON BILL

Measure introduced in outline form, substance being amended into it at a future date.

SPEAKER

Presiding officer of the Assembly, elected by the body at each session.

SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

Literally, speaker for the time; substitute presiding officer, taking the chair on request of the Speaker in the Speaker's absence; elected by the body at each session.

SPECIAL ORDER

Matter of business set for a special time and day designated, regardless of its place on the file.

SPOT BILL

Similar to skeleton bill.

STATUTES

Compilation of all enacted bills, chaptered by the Secretary of State in the order in which they became law and prepared in book form by the state printer.

STOPPING THE CLOCK

Practice of lengthening the hours of the legislative day, regardless of the passing of the hours of the calendar day, by stopping the clock.

SUSPEND THE CONSTITUTION

An action taken only in cases of emergency, requiring a two-thirds vote of the house, whereby the requirement of reading a bill on three separate days is temporarily suspended in relation to a specific measure.

TAKEN OFF CALENDAR

Bill no longer on active committee hearing schedule.

TAKEN UNDER SUBMISSION

- 1) insufficient votes to pass out of committee bill is not dead reconsideration may be granted;
- 2) if bill is pending in subcommittee, all bills with related subject matter are referred to as "under submission," meaning under consideration. After the subcommittee has met, it recommends to the full committee those bills which should be passed or held.

THIRD HOUSE

Lobbyists.

TITLE

A brief italicized paragraph identifying the subject matter and preceding the contents of a measure.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE

In the Assembly, 54; in the Senate, 27; regardless of any vacancies.

UNICAMERAL

A legislature consisting on one house.

UPPER HOUSE

The Senate.

URGENCY

A matter affecting the public peace, health, or safety (see Art. IV, Sec. 8 (d), California Constitution).

URGENCY CLAUSE

A bill which contains an urgency clause takes effect upon the Governor's signature. A vote on the urgency clause must precede a vote on the bill and requires a two-thirds vote for passage.

VETO

Action of a Governor in disapproval of a measure. May be overridden. Item veto-- Governor may reduce or eliminate items of appropriation while approving rest of bill. May be overridden. Pocket veto--Governor fails to sign bill after final adjournment. Cannot be overridden. A pocket veto is no longer possible under the California Constitution.

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